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*The Schools of the PROPHETS.*

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**SERMON**

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## *The Schools of the PROPHEETS.*

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### AMOS VII. 14, 15.

*Then answered Amos, and said to Amaziah, I was no Prophet, neither was I a Prophet's Son; but I was an Herdman, and a Gatherer of Sycomore Fruit.*

*And the LORD took me, as I followed the Flock, and the LORD said unto me, Go, prophesie unto my People Israel.*

**T**O come at the Import of these Words, we have no occasion to look any further backward than to the tenth verse. We may there read that this *Amaziah*, to whom the Prophet here speaks, was the idolatrous Priest of *Bethel*, which was one of the High Places where *Jeroboam*, the Son of *Nebat*, had erected a Calf for the Ten Tribes to worship, to prevent their Returning to their Allegiance to the King of *Judah*, which they would have been apt to have done, had they still continu'd to go up, as formerly, to do Sacrifice in the House of the LORD at *Jerusalem* (a). The Occasion of the Answer, which

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(a) 1 Kings XII. 26, &c.



*Amos* makes to *Amaziah* was a Complaint of that Priest against the Prophet, for preaching against the Idolatry committed at these Places, and denouncing for that Reason, *Destruction with the Sword* against the House of *Jeroboam*, then King of *Israel* (b). This, we must be sensible, must very nearly concern the Interest, as well as the Honour, of *Amaziah*: Infomuch that it is no wonder if he should endeavour, by the best Stratagem he was able to contrive, to rid himself of so troublesome and dangerous an Adversary. He therefore sends a Complaint of him to the King, and, the more effectually to bring upon him the Royal Displeasure, accuses him of Sedition, Conspiracy and Treason: An Experiment that has since been often tried with Success, by Men who, when they have wanted to discountenance a Doctrine that thwarts their Designs, have found their Ends in charging the Preachers of it with Disaffection to the Government. Allegations of this Nature, as they are founded upon Malice, so they must be supported with Lies: So we find by Experience it is now-adays, and so the Context informs us it was here. *Amos*, as I have observ'd, had threatned the House of *Jeroboam* with Destruction by the Sword: Not that the Prophet spake maliciously against him; but as tenderly forewarning him of a Judgment that God Himself had denounc'd, and which was soon after fulfill'd against his Son *Zachariah* by the Hands of *Shallum* the Son of *Nabesh* (c). However, This, *Amaziah* thought, would not nearly enough affect *Jeroboam* himself, to raise his Indignation against the Prophet: The Story there-

(b) *Amos* VII. 9.(c) 2 *Kings* XV. 10.



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fore must be improv'd; and what the Prophet had denounc'd against his *House*, must be reported to the King as if threatned to his *Person*. Then *Amaziah the Priest of Bethel* sent to *Jeroboam, King of Israel*, saying, *Amos hath conspir'd against thee in the midst of the House of Israel: the Land is not able to bear all his Words. For thus Amos saith, Jeroboam shall die by the Sword, and Israel shall surely be led away Captive out of their own Land* (d). How the King took this, and what Answer he made to it we do not read: But it seems from the next words that the Idolatrous Priest had Encouragement enough to insult the Prophet, and to forbid his appearing any more before the King. Also *Amaziah said unto Amos, O thou Seer, go, flee thee away into the Land of Judah, and there eat Bread, and prophesie there*: There perhaps thou wilt find more Encouragement, since there it is likely thy Prophecies will meet with more Regard: But prophesie not again any more at Bethel, for it is the King's Chapel, and it is the King's Court (e). An effectual Way this to quiet the Minds of Courtiers under the Convictions of sin, viz. to dismiss the Chaplain from Waiting that shall apprize them of their Guilt! The Answer, which the Prophet returns to the Priest, is such as became the Mouth of one that spake by a superior Authority to that which forbad him: He gives him to understand that the Judgments which he had denounc'd, he had denounc'd by the Divine Authority and Command; and That convey'd to him not in the Course of the ordinary way of training up to Prophecy, but by virtue of an immediate Inspiration and Call, which unsought and

(d) Amos VII. 10, 11.

(e) Ib. v. 12, 13.

unexpected he had receiv'd from God: *Then answer'd Amos and said to Amaziah I was no Prophet, neither was I a Prophet's Son: I was neither by Birth nor by immediate Separation from the Womb, set apart, or consecrated to the Office of Prophecy; nor did I receive my Education in any of the Colleges or Schools where Students are train'd up and made fit to perform it: But I was an Herdman and a Gatherer of Sycomore Fruit; leading an humble, country Life, among Sheep-coats and Folds, concern'd for nothing but to provide Pasture for my Flock, thoughtless of any higher Condition or Employ, and void of any superior Knowledge or Skill. So far out of the ordinary Road of Prophets, the LORD took me (saith he) as I follow'd the Flock, and the LORD said unto me, Go, prophesie unto my People Israel.*

Thus the Prophet asserts and vindicates his Commission and Call, shews it to be independent upon any Power on Earth, and consequently that he was accountable for the Exercise of it to no man. After which he concludes with repeating and confirming the Judgments he had denounc'd, but adding withal a particular Judgment against *Amaziah*, for daring to question and dispute his Authority: *Now therefore hear thou the Word of the Lord; Thou sayest Prophecie not against Israel, and drop not thy Word against the House of Isaac: Therefore thus saith the LORD, Thy Wife shall be an Harlot in the City, and thy Sons and thy Daughters shall fall by the Sword, and thy Land shall be divided by Line: and thou shalt die in a polluted Land, and Israel shall surely go into Captivity forth of his Land (f).*

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(f) Ib. v. 16, 17.

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Thus we have seen both the Occasion and the Import or Meaning of the Text: But I have no Design to treat of it at present as it stands related to the Context, ( in which Light it would afford us many useful Observations worthy to be insisted upon at another Time ; ) But I shall now consider the Words separately and by themselves, and shall endeavour to make such Use of them only, as may be proper to the present Season and Solemnity : With this view, I shall observe

I. In the FIRST Place, That here is a direct Intimation, that, even in the Ages of Inspiration, the *Jews*, had settled *Colleges* or *Schools* for the Education of Prophets, and to fit and dispose them for the Reception of the Spirit.

II. SECONDLY, That here is also a tacit Concession, that God usually chose His Prophets from hence, and that none could *ordinarily* be engag'd in that Office, unless he had been train'd up to it by such Education.

III. THIRDLY, That here is an Instance, that upon Exercising this Office, without such preceeding Preparation and Study, the Prophet was expected to be able to alledge an *immediate* Inspiration and Call from God.

These Heads therefore, with other Observations which they will suggest, and a suitable Application of the whole at last, I propose for the Subject of my present Discourse.

I. And



## 6 *The Schools of the Prophets.*

I. And FIRST I would observe that here is a direct Intimation, that, even in the Ages of Inspiration, the *Jews* had settled *Colleges* or *Schools* for the Education of Prophets, and to fit and dispose them for the Reception of the Spirit. This I take to be suggested by the very first Branch of *Amos's* Answer to *Amaziah*: *I was no Prophet* (saith he) *neither was I a Prophet's Son*: a direct Implication that there were at that time in *Israel* not only *Prophets* but *Prophets Sons*. Now by the *Son of a Prophet*, it is plain from other passages of Scripture, which I shall have occasion to mention by and by, is to be understood one who, under the Care and Direction of a Prophet, was educated or train'd up as a Disciple or Scholar: If then a *Prophet's Son* be a *Prophet's Disciple*; it is reasonable we should understand by a *Prophet* in the Text (since it is there oppos'd to a *Prophet's Son*) not only one who was actually endu'd with the Spirit of Prophecy (without which to be sure a Man could not be a Prophet;) but one who was also engag'd as a *Tutor* or *Instructor* to fit and dispose others for the same Office with himself. So that both Terms together seem clearly to intimate that there was a settled *Method* amongst the *Jews* for training up Students to the Prophetick Office, which was not ordinarily attain'd but by long Application, Study and Use.

And indeed if we look back into the ancient Records both of *Jews* and *Gentiles*, we shall find plain Footsteps remaining of great Preparations which those Persons went thro', who offer'd themselves as Candidates for the Power of Prophecy. As to the *Heathens*, who sought only after a Spirit of *Divination*, we are told of some very solemn Ceremonies

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remories which they us'd, to fit themselves for the Influx of their imaginary Deities, and to call forth the Souls of Dead Men into themselves to enable them to presage things future and contingent (g). The *Heathens* indeed are no proper Instances of the Preparations that are necessary to the receiving an Influx which is truly *Divine*: But since it may be prov'd that they us'd such Preparations (which by the way too will be allow'd to have been instrumental to the obtaining the Assistance of those Persons they submitted to and ador'd;) and since most of the Rites, which were practis'd by the *Heathens*, were taken up in Imitation of the Rites which the true God had prescrib'd to be observ'd in the Worship of Himself; it may not unfairly be presum'd that those *Preparations* which the *Gentiles* went thro', to fit themselves for the receiving the Spirit of *Divination*, were in imitation or mimickry of some *preparatory Discipline*, which the *Jews* observ'd as necessary to fit themselves for the Spirit of *Prophecy*.

Not that we want Proofs amongst the *Jewish* Writers themselves, as well too amongst the inspir'd ones as those that were not, of regular *Colleges* or *Schools* set apart for training up Students to the Prophetick Office. Some of the *Modern Jews* indeed carry their Accounts of these Schools higher than they have any Authority to support them; pretending to trace them to *Abraham*, and to *Noah*, to *Seth*, and to *Adam* (h). It is true the

(g) R. Albo. Maam. 3. c. 8. as cited by Smith, in his Discourse of Prophecy c. 8. in his Select Discourses p. 240.

(h) Vide Jacob. Alting. de Re-

publica Hebræorum, p. 12. & Abendana of the Schools among the Hebrews in his Discourses of the Ecclesiastical and Civil Polity of the Jews, c. 5. p. 128. &c.

*Spirit*

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*Spirit* of Prophecy might more or less reside among the Patriarchs and others from the earliest Ages: And it seems clear from the famous Prediction of *Moses*, viz. *The LORD thy God shall raise up unto thee a Prophet from the midst of thee, of thy Brethren, like unto me, unto him shall ye hearken* (i); It seems clear I say from this Prediction, that the Prophe-tick Spirit was to be *continually* amongst them. It is certain indeed those Words do principally and ultimately point at *Christ* to whom *St Peter* applies them (k); But it is evident likewise that they must be also understood of a *Succession* of Prophets, since without such Succession the Completion of them would have been no Security or Defence to the present *Israelites* against Enchanters and Diviners, as it appears from the Context it was design'd to be. However tho' the *Gift* and *Spirit* of Prophecy might be *always* amongst the *Jews*; yet the Instance of a *preparatory Exercise* and *Discipline* in order for attaining it does not appear so ancient as the modern Jewish Writers are willing to believe.

Not but that it is evident, from the first Testimony we read of them, that there were settled Colleges or Schools for this purpose ancients than any Account we have left of them. The first Mention of such a College we find in the Tenth Chapter of the *First Book of Samuel*, where there is an Account of *Saul's* meeting, and joining himself to, a *Company of Prophets at the Hill of God as they came down from the High-Place with Musick before them* (l). What the Text expresses by a *Company of Prophets*, Most Commentators, as well Jewish as Christian, agree to interpret of a Society of Students devoting

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(i) Deut. XVIII. 15.    (k) Acts III. 22.    (l) 1 Sam. X. 5, 10.  
themselves



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themselves to the Study and Attaining of Prophecy. Where and what this *Hill of God* was, is disputed by Interpreters: But the most probable Conjecture is, that it was in *Gibeah of Benjamin*, the Place where *Saul's* Father dwelt (m); and that it was call'd the *Hill of God*, as well upon the Account of the Company of Prophets, who had here dedicated themselves to the Service of God, as also because of its being a High-Place whereon the People were us'd to offer Sacrifice. However it is certain that here was a Garrison of the *Philistines* kept in the same Place, whom, tho' Enemies to the People and the true Worship of God, *Grotius* observes to be preferable to many Christians now; in that in the Heat of their Conquests they were careful to preserve those places from Rapine where Learned Men were employ'd in sacred Studies (n). The Reason why these Prophets came down from the Hill with *Musick* before them, and the *Effect* which it had upon *Saul* when he met them, I shall have Occasion perhaps to mention in the Sequel. At present I shall go on to take Notice of some other *Colleges* or *Schools*, of which we have some Mention in the sacred Writings. The next that occurs is in the Nineteenth Chapter of the Book now before us, where we read of a like *Company of Prophets at Naioth in Ramah*, prophesying with *Samuel*, who stood as appointed over them (o), and whose Prophesying it seems, had the same Power and Influence upon *Saul* and his Messengers

(m) It is plain from v. II, 13, 14. that this happen'd towards the end of *Saul's* Journey, where his Uncle dwelt, and where he himself was well known: And we also read in Ch. XIII. 2, 3.

of a Garrison of Philistines which was kept in Gibeah.

(n) See *Grotius* on the place, and de Jur. Bell. & Pacis. l. 3. c. 11. §. 10.

(o) 1 Sam. XIX. 20, &c.

B

who

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who came to apprehend *David*, as we read it had upon *Saul* himself before, at the *Hill of God*. After this again we read in the *Second Book of Kings* of several other such Schools in the Days of *Elijah*, and of his Successor *Elisha*: As in the Second Chapter, for Instance, we have express Mention made of *the Sons of the Prophets that were at Bethel* (p), and of others that were at *Fericho* (q): In the Fourth Chapter we have an Account of *Elisha's* coming to *Gilgal*, and of *the Sons of the Prophets* that were there sitting before him (r): And in the Fifth again we read of some *Sons of the Prophets who belong'd to Mount Ephraim* (s); and lastly in the Twenty Second Chapter (in our own Translation at least) there is Mention made of a *College, where a Prophetess dwelt at Jerusalem* (t). So that it seems as if they were dispers'd thro' all the Cities of the *Israelites*, that they might be every where at Hand to instruct, or encourage, or reprove the People. And it is certain that the whole Kingdom was so well supply'd with them in the Reign of *Ahab*, that one good Man alone (*Obadiah* by Name) had an Opportunity of hiding an Hundred of them at once, by Fifty in a Cave, from the Persecution of *Jezabel*, and That, after she had cut off and slew the main Body of them (u).

From the Places above cited it will be easy to confirm what I have but barely hinted in the Opening of this Head: viz. that the *Sons of the Prophets* were their *Disciples* or *Scholars*, who under the Care and Tuition of some one eminent amongst them,

(p) 2 Kings II. 3.  
(q) Ib. v. 5.  
(r) 2 Kings IV. 38.

(s) 2 Kings V. 22.  
(t) 2 Kings XXII. 14.  
(u) 1 Kings XVIII. 4, 13.

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were taught and instructed in the same Office of Prophecy. They are mention'd we see as so numerous and frequent, that they could not be their Sons by *Nature* or *Birth*, but were only so call'd upon the Account of their being brought up under their *Tutelage* and *Care*: A Relation that has been always indifferently express'd either by *Father* and *Son*, or by *Master* and *Disciple*. Accordingly when one asks, *Who is the Father* of the Prophets at the Hill of God? He is understood to mean, *Who is their Instructor or Teacher* (x)? And when *Elisha* whom I shall shew to have been only the *Disciple* of *Elijah*, saw his Master taken from him, he call'd out to him in his Exclamation, *My Father, My Father* (y). In the same sense we find our Saviour long afterwards calls his *Disciples* his *Children* (z), and *St Paul* claims the Title of *Father* over the *Corinthians*, because in *Christ Jesus*, he had begotten them thro' the *Gospel*; whom therefore he styles his *beloved Sons*; as immediatly afterwards he also calls his Disciple *Timothy*, his *beloved and faithful Son in the Lord* (a). And in Conformity hereunto both the *Chaldee Paraphrase* and the *Syriack Version*, in the Places above-mention'd, render what we translate the *Sons of the Prophets* by the *Prophets Disciples*.

And indeed the whole Account that I shall give of these Prophets will be one continu'd Confirmation of this Exposition of that Phrase. However since I am upon it, I shall first take notice of two places in particular, which seem most clearly to point out this Relation. The first is, where we have Mention of a *Company of Prophets* at *Naioth* in *Ra-*

(x) 1 Sam. X. 12.  
(y) 2 Kings II. 12.

(z) Mark X. 24.  
(a) 1 Cor. IV. 14, 15, 17.



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*mah*, and *Samuel* standing as appointed over them (b); the other is, where there is an Account of *Elisba's* returning to *Gilgal*, and of the *Sons of the Prophets* sitting before him (c). I think it is not to be doubted but that the *Sons of the Prophets* and a *Company of Prophets* are only two Terms us'd to denote the same Order of Men: and that *Samuel*, standing as appointed over the one, and the sitting of the other before *Elisba*, have also the same Meaning belonging to each of them; viz. that *Samuel* and *Elisba* were as *Governors*, *Tutors* and *Instructors* to their respective *Pupils*. It is certain that both Terms exactly correspond to the Method then us'd in the instructing of Disciples; which was for the Master to sit in an Eminence above, and the Disciples upon a lower Form at his Feet: In allusion to which when the *Sons of the Prophets* at *Bethel* and *Jericho* would give Notice to *Elisba* of the Design of the LORD to remove *Elijah* from him, they express it by taking away his *Master from his Head* (d); and when *St Paul* gives the *Jews* an Account of his Education, he tells them he was brought up at the Feet of *Gamaliel* (e).

Having thus settled the *Relation* between the *Prophets* and their *Sons*, and shew'd that the one were the *Pupils* or *Disciples* of the other; let us in the next place enquire into the *Methods* of their Education, and see by what *Studies* they were prepar'd and made fit for their Office.

And here first it may be proper to begin with the Places of their *Habitation*: For it seems they did not pursue their Studies, each one separately

(b) 1 Sam. XIX. 20.  
(c) 2 Kings IV. 38.

(d) 2 Kings II. 3. 5.  
(e) Acts XXII. 3.

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by himself, at his own private Dwelling ; but, for the Benefit and Advantage of publick Exercise and Discipline, united together into Societies and Communities, each of which had convenient Colleges for their Abode, where they liv'd under the Government of some noted Prophet, who was appointed, it is probable, by a Divine Election to be their President or Head. For thus the Sons of the Prophets ( at *Gilgal* as it is suppos'd ) liv'd with *Elisba* ; and grew so numerous under so eminent a Master, as that the Place where they dwelt being at last too strait for them, they were forc'd to desire *Elisba's* Leave for the enlarging their Buildings (f). Accordingly, with his Approbation and Consent, they lay a new Foundation upon the Banks of *Jordan* : a Place singled out for the same Reason, which, I suppose, mov'd the Prophets before mention'd to fix their Residence at the *Hill of God*, viz. because such Places, being remote from the Noise and Hurry of Towns, were more suitable to a studious and contemplative Life.

In these Places it is probable they not only liv'd, but also *common'd* together upon such Provisions as were there provided for them at the Direction of their President. For so we find at the College of *Gilgal*, just now nam'd, *Elisba* ordering *Pottage to be seeth'd for the Sons of the Prophets* (g) : upon which an excellent Commentator (h) takes occasion to observe, that the Food which was provided for them was plain and common ; such as the Gardens and Fields would afford, without much Labour and of small Price. Tho' might I presume to add my own Conjecture, I should impute the Plain-

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(f) 2 Kings VI. 1, 2. (g) 2 Kings IV. 38. (h) *Bp Patrick.*

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ness of the Provision here mention'd to the *Dearth*, which we are told, by the same verse, was then in the Land, which might hinder the People from bringing in other Provision for their Support: For two or three verses lower it looks as if they were maintain'd at the publick Expence; there being exprefs Mention made of *twenty Loaves of Barley, Bread of the First Fruits and full Ears of Corn in the Husk thereof* which were brought by one Man, in this Time of Scarcity, and offer'd to *Elisba* for the Use of his College.

This seems to have been their Manner and Way of Living. As to their *Study* and *Employment*, we shall find it was to be instructed in the whole Mystery of *Prophecy*: i. e. not as it signifies the bare Foretelling of future Events; but in the largest and fullest signification of the Word, as it implies the uttering or speaking something by a Divine Impulse or Inspiration, whatever Time it may respect, whether past, present, or to-come. Nay even *Giving Thanks* and *Praising God* with Songs and Instruments of *Musick* in the House of the LORD, is in the *First Book of Chronicles* call'd *Prophefying with Harps, with Psalteries and Cymbals* (i). And if *St Paul* use *Prophefying* in the same Sense, when he allows a *Woman to prophesie*, provided she does it *with her head cover'd* (k); it may not be difficult to reconcile that Passage of him with another, in which he does not permit *Women to speak* (i. e. by way of Teaching or Instructing) but expressly enjoins them *to keep Silence in the Church* (l). But whatever might be the Meaning of the Apostle in that Place, it is certain that the setting forth the

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(i) 1 Chron. XXV. 1—7. (k) 1 Cor. XI. 5. (l) 1 Cor. XIV. 4.



## *The Schools of the Prophets.* 15

Glory of God in Hymns of Praise, was one principal Part of the Exercise perform'd at the Prophetick Schools. For in this Sense must be understood the Prophefying before-mention'd, of the Company of Prophets at the Hill of God, *with a Psaltery, and a Tabret, and a Pipe, and a Harp* (m); and also the Prophefying of the others at *Naioth in Ramah* (n), tho' there is no particular mention made in this latter place, of their Instruments of Musick. The Reason why this solemn Singing of Hymns has the Name of *Prophefying* given to it, was perhaps because their Songs were immediatly inspir'd by the Holy Ghost, and suggested to the Prophets themselves as they Sung: tho' it might not unaptly be express'd by that Name, should the Matter of their Songs have been precompos'd; if so be the first Authors of them (whoever they were) compos'd them originally by Divine Inspiration. For in that Passage of the *Chronicles*, which I mention'd but now, the Sons of *Asaph* and of *Heman* &c. are said to prophefie (as praising God with propheticall Composures) tho' the Psalms which they sung were beforehand endited by *David* for their Use (o). And it is remarkable that in the Account of the Company of Prophets prophefying at *Naioth*, *Samuel* is said to be standing amongst them *as appointed over them*; who being amply indu'd with the Gift of the Spirit, it is not impossible but that the Hymns or Songs which his Disciples sung were such as he himself had compos'd by the Inspiration of the Holy Ghost. But this I offer only as a Conjecture: However I think we may fairly infer from what is here said

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(m) 1 Sam. X. 5, 10. (n) 1 Sam. XIX. 20. (o) See Mr Mede p. 59.

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of *Samuel*, that the Singing such Hymns to the Glory of God was an Exercise or Duty which the Masters taught and the Scholars learn'd, in the Prophetick Schools.

The first, and to be sure the principal, Design of these Instructions, was that they who devoted their whole Study and Time to the Honour of God, might always be provided with suitable Acts of Adoration and Praise, for his Worship and Service. Not but that this Practice (like other Duties of Religion) had a natural Tendency to facilitate and promote a Progress in their Studies. For by such a constant and daily Use of *Psalmody*, they kept themselves continually in such due Temper of Mind, as might the better dispose them for the Divine Breathings of the Prophetick Spirit; which being of a mild, and free, and gentle, Nature, would not consort with Sadness, or melancholy and turbulent Passions, but alwaies chose an easy, calm, and chearful, Disposition. Of this we have a remarkable Instance in *Elisha*, who, tho' he possess'd a double Portion of this Spirit (p), yet could not exert it whilst his Passions were disorder'd, but was forc'd to wait till he was calm and easy: For so we read that, upon some Indignation that he had conceiv'd against the King of *Israel*, he could not prophesy unto the King of *Judah*, till he was sooth'd again and quieted by the Help of a *Minstrel*. *As the LORD of Hosts loveth* (saith he) *before whom I stand; surely were it not that I regard the Presence of Jehoshaphat the King of Judah, I would not look toward thee nor see thee: But now bring me a Minstrel: And it came to pass, when*

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(p) 2 Kings II. 9—15.

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*the Minstrell play'd, that the Hand of the LORD, i. e. the Spirit of Prophecy, came upon him (q).*

One end therefore, we may suppose, of their applying themselves so diligently to the Use of *Psal-mody* and *Musick* was to keep themselves serene and void of such Disturbances as might be a Let or Hindrance to this peaceable Spirit. Over and above which it is likewise reasonable to believe that it also conduc'd to the communicating of this Influence from the Prophet to the Hearers: viz. by working up the Thoughts and Imaginations of their Disciples to a Sympathy with their own; by which means their Principles would be more easily instill'd, and the Spirit it self more readily convey'd. The Case of *Saul* is a very remarkable Instance of this: Who coming to the *Hill of God*, and there hearing the Prophets prophesying in the manner describ'd above, was turn'd directly into another Man, *his Heart being chang'd and he prophesying amongst them (r)*: The very same Event which happen'd first to his Messengers, and then again to himself, sometime afterwards, when he would have fetch'd *David* by force from among the Prophets at *Naioth (s)*. From this powerful Influence upon such as oppos'd themselves as *Enemies* to the Holy Spirit of God; we may guess what Energy and Force it must have upon those who were *predispos'd* to receive it. And indeed that such a Method must be very instrumental to raise an Agreement and Sympathy of Mind; we may partly judge from those small Resemblances of it which we our selves have sometimes felt, when from a chearful and free overflowing of

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(q) 2 Kings III. 14, 15. (r) 1 Sam. X. 9, 10. (s) 1 Sam. XIX. 20--24.



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Reason in an intelligible, but yet unexpected, way, in a Person who has discours'd to us upon a Subject perhaps unknown to us before; We have perceiv'd, even without these extraordinary Helps, like Thoughts and Sentiments to arise in our selves.

But I need not enlarge any further upon this: My principal Design in it being only to show that even the Methods of Education, that appear to have been us'd in the Prophetick Schools, are a sufficient Proof that Prophecy was a *Science* amongst the *Jews*, and that Men were train'd up to it by *Management* and *Art*.

It will be necessary however to proceed a little further to show that the other Parts of the Prophetick Office, as well as this which I have now been mentioning, were what the Disciples or Sons of the Prophets were instructed in and practis'd. This may partly be inferr'd from the Duties they were put upon, whilst they were only Probationers under the Tuition of their Governours or Guides: By which it seems they were often employ'd as their Deputies or Proxies to execute their Orders, and to do some lesser Offices in their Stead: which to be sure was done not so much to spare the Labour of the Prophet, as to teach their Scholars the Business, to which they expected, one day or other, in their own Right to be call'd. Thus, for instance, we find one of the *Children of the Prophets* employ'd by *Elisha* to anoint *Jehu* the Son of *Jehoshaphat* to be King over *Israel* (t). Tho' the principal Business to which these Students applied themselves was undoubtedly the Study of the Law of God, in order to teach and explain it to the

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(t) 2 Kings IX.

People. For that this was an Office which the Prophets perform'd we may learn from the Question which the good *Shunammite* was ask'd by her Husband, when she was going to *Elisba* to implore his Assistance for the raising of her Child: *Wherefore* (saith he) *wilt thou go to him to day? it is neither New-Moon nor Sabbath* (u): which evidently alludes to a Resort of the People to the Prophet at those solemn Times, for the instructing and directing them in the Will of God. And it is suppos'd to have been in right of this part of his Function that the *Man from Baarshalisba*, mention'd a little lower, brought to him the Offering of the *First Fruits of his Corn* (x). For the *First Fruits*, by the Law, were to be given to the *Priests* (y): But the *Priests* having been driven away from the Ten Tribes ever since *Jeroboam's* setting up his Calves at *Bethel* and *Dan* (z); it is not improbable but that the Maintenance that was us'd to be given to them, might be now brought to the Prophets who took the care of instructing the People in their Stead.

And indeed *Preaching* and Declaring the Duties of Religion is so very proper to the Business of a Prophet, that *St Paul* generally chuses to express it by *Phophesying* (a): And amongst the difficult Officers that God had appointed in the Church he distinguishes those who were peculiarly endu'd with this Gift, by the Name of *Prophets* (b). It is generally believ'd indeed, and upon good Foundation, that the *Prophefying* *St Paul* speaks of was a Faculty of teaching the Myseries of Religion

(u) 2 Kings IV. 23.

(x) Ibid. v. 42.

(y) Numb. XVIII. 12.

(z) 2 Chron. XI. 14.

(a) Rom. XII. 6. 1 Cor. XIV.

31, 32. 1 Theff. V. 20.

(b) Ephef. IV. 11.

## 20 *The Schools of the Prophets.*

by the Help of a Divine Illumination from above: and it is certain that the Notion of Prophefying implies in it not only the Office of expounding and interpreting the written Word, but a Power also of revealing the Secret Will of God, and a Gift of foretelling things to come. But even in this highest Sense it will appear to imply no more than what our Disciples at the Prophetick Schools, by their Study and Application, at last attain'd to. The *Sons of the Prophets* both at *Bethel* and *Jericho* were beforehand appriz'd of the Design of the LORD to remove *Elijah* from the Head of *Elisha* (c): And it was also a certain Man of the *Sons of the Prophets* that denounc'd to *Ahab*, under the Parable of a Prisoner, the Judgments of God for his untimely Pity in his releasing *Benhadad*, whom the LORD had appointed to utter destruction (d). And indeed when any Blessings were to be promis'd, or any Judgments to be denounc'd, or some extraordinary Event to be told to the People; the Messenger was usually chosen from these Schools, where, by their preceeding preparatory Exercise and Discipline, they were render'd more susceptible of the Divine Impulse, by knowing as it were how to cherish and encourage it, and in short by their Concurrence to assist the Revelation. But this leads me directly to

II. The SECOND Observation which I made upon the Text, viz. That it contains a tacit Concession that God usually chose His Prophets from hence, and that none could *ordinarily* be engag'd in the Prophetick Office unless he had been train'd

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(c) 2 Kings II. 3, 5.

(d) 1 Kings XX. 35. &c.



## *The Schools of the Prophets.* 21

up to it by such Education. And this I take the same words to imply which I laid down as the Foundation of the foregoing Head: *I was no Prophet* (saith *Amos*) *neither was I a Prophet's Son*, which he mentions to show that it was something extraordinary that he was endu'd with the Spirit of Prophecy; which was not usually given to any but those who had made it their Business and Endeavours to obtain it, by the Use of such preparatory Exercise and Study, as might qualify them to receive it.

That this was really the Case, the same History will inform us which has already been so useful to us in the former part of this Discourse: All the Events, that are there said to have been foretold, were declar'd by *Prophets*, or *Prophets' Sons*, or *Men of God*. Now the Power of Prophecy in the *Prophets' Sons* is the Thing it self I have undertook to prove: It only remains therefore that we know who are to be understood by those that are call'd *Prophets* and *Men of God*. And these I imagine to have been the same with the former: Only as those, who were as yet but *Probationers*, were properly distinguish'd by the *Sons of the Prophets*; so the Title of *Prophets* and *Men of God* might be reserv'd for those who were the *Presidents* or *Governors* of their Colleges or Schools, or were at least *Adepts* in the Mystery of Prophecy, and so were call'd to the Exercise of their Office abroad. That this is no forc'd Account of these Terms, I think may be inferr'd from their being both of them mention'd as the usual Titles of *Elijah* first, and afterwards of *Elisha*; who were each of them, in their Order, first a Learner and then a Teacher in the Science of Prophecy. I shall only instance in the

the Case of *Elisha* as being the clearest of the two: His *Presiding* over the Prophets, after the Assumption of *Elijah*, as their *Instructor* and *Guide*, has already been observ'd from his Care in providing for them, from their sitting before him in the Posture of Disciples, and from their addressing him for Leave to enlarge their Building: and that He himself had been train'd up in the same manner before, appears from the Character of him which was given by a Servant of *Jehoram* King of *Israel*, viz. that he had *pour'd Water on the Hands of Elijah* (e): This shew'd that the one had formerly minister'd to the other; and in what Quality or Respect, may be gather'd from *Elijah's* being afterwards call'd his *Master* and *Father* (f), which shows that *Elisha* was his *Disciple* or *Son*. So that His Case alone is an Instance sufficient that the *Highest* Degree of Inspiration was attain'd by those that apply'd themselves to it, by Study and Use. For *Elisha*, we know, had a *double Portion* of the Spirit of his Master (g), which must signify at least that he had the share of a first Born, or doubly the Portion of an ordinary Prophet; and is interpreted by some (tho' not I think upon very probable grounds) of twice as much as had been given to *Elijah* (gg).

And that even the *Lesser* Degrees were seldom bestow'd upon any but those that were educated and train'd up in such previous Studies as might dispose them for them; may be inferr'd from the Wonder which the People express'd at the Propheying of *Saul*. For had it been usual for those to be endu'd

(e) 2 Kings III. 11.

(f) 2 Kings II. 3, 5, 12.

(g) Ibid. 9 — 12.

(gg) See Pole's Synopsis on the Place.

## *The Schools of the Prophets.* 23

with the Spirit, who had not gone thro' such a preparatory Course; *Saul's* bearing a Part with them in their *Anthems* or *Hymns* only, would not have caus'd so great an Admiration as to have given Rise to a Proverb, as we find it did; it being customary from that time, when any one was observ'd to rise of a sudden from an obscure Condition to some eminent Dignity, to say, *Is Saul also amongst the Prophets* (h)? The Amazement indeed was something allay'd by a prudent Question of a Stander-by; who seasonably ask'd them, who was *their* Father? i. e. who was the *Father* of that Company of Prophets from whom the Spirit of the LORD was deriv'd upon *Saul*? intimating, no doubt, that the same God who enabled and assisted *them* with His Spirit, could, if he pleas'd, inspire *Saul* also of a sudden without the Help of any other Master or previous Education. And to be sure the Power of God is not to be disputed. However it is evident from the Astonishment of the Beholders that the Case was exceeding novel and rare: And this Instance of it shows that it was more a Token of the Strength and Power of the Spirit in the Prophets, than of any due Tendency or Qualification in *Saul*: For it did not continue and remain with him as a Habit, as it did with those that were train'd up to it by Discipline and Use; but as soon as he was separated from the Prophets, his Prophecy ceased: After which we read of it no more, till upon a like occasion, at *Naioth* in *Ramah*, the Spirit of the LORD came upon him again: But then it was also so unexpected and surprizing, that the Text tells us the old Proverb was renew'd upon

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(h) 1 Sam. X. 12.



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it, viz. *Is Saul among the Prophets* (i)? Not that it is to be denied that Men sometimes were endu'd with the Spirit of Prophecy without their seeking it, and that they were call'd to the Exercise of the Prophetick Office without any previous Preparations of their own: But then it may be urg'd that, whenever this happen'd, the Prophet was expected to be able to alledge an *immediate Inspiration and Call from God*: Which was

III. The THIRD Observation I made upon the Text, which gives us an Instance of this very Case in the Person of *Amos*: *I was no Prophet* (saith he) *neither was I a Prophets Son; but I was an Herdman, and a Gatherer of Sycomore Fruit.* This we may presume was an Engagement and Employ that left him but little Opportunity of improving himself by Study, and less Expectations of being call'd to an Office which the greatest Preparations did usually preceed. And yet we find that how unexpected soever it might be to himself, and how surprising soever it might be to others; he is suddenly remov'd from his former Occupation, and undertakes to denounce the heavy Judgments of God against *Judah* and *Israel*, against the *Syrians* and *Philistines*, and all the Neighbouring Nations about him. But was this any sudden Motion of his own? Was it any extraordinary Holiness or Sanctity, or any superior natural Abilities that put him upon taking this Office upon himself? Far from it: He enters his Protestation against any such surmize; and solemnly declares that both the Motion and the Power were entirely from God. The LORD

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(i) 1 Sam. XIX. 23, 24.

## *The Schools of the Prophets.* 25

took me (saith he) as I follow'd the Flock, and the LORD said unto me, Go, prophesie unto my People Israel. And whom the LORD vouchsafes so immediatly to call, we may be sure He will supply to him, by the extraordinary Influence of His Spirit, whatever was wanting from a previous Education. But without such a Call and so extraordinary a Supply, the Words of *Amos* seem evidently to suppose that the Exercise of any part of the Prophetick Office, by one not educated and train'd up amongst them, was beside his Vocation. But I have been too large upon the First Head of my Discourse (which indeed was the principal one I had in my view) to insist more particularly upon either of the latter. I shall therefore proceed to draw some useful Observations from the Whole, which, with a suitable Application, will take up more time than I ought to hope for, after having spent so much already.

I. First then, We may learn from what has been said the Necessity of a *Method* of Education and Discipline to qualifie Persons for the Offices of Religion. We have seen that the Disciples in the Prophetick Schools, tho' they expected to be assisted by Divine Inspiration, did not neglect to improve *themselves*, as far as they were able, by Application and Study. And tho' perhaps the particular Methods of Education are not so clearly discern'd after the Accounts of those Schools begin to fail; yet we may still observe that most of the Prophets, of whom we have any Remains in the sacred Text, have discover'd themselves to have been Men of a good Education. The *Elegance* of *Isaiah*, the *Rhetorick* of *Jeremiah*, and the Skill of *Ezekiel* in *Architecture* and *Geography*, plainly show the

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Education of each of them to have been liberal and ingenuous. And the *Wisdom of Daniel* was so famous even in his Youth, that we find it gave Rise to a *Chaldean Proverb* (k). Nor is there any Grounds to imagine that these Endowments, were inspir'd, or that they receiv'd them together with the extraordinary Influence and Operations of the Spirit; since it appears that even those, who were actually endu'd with the Holy Ghost, still us'd the same Diligence, or rather more than before, to gain what Knowledge and Assistance they could, by the Use and Help of ordinary Means. The last mention'd Prophet is an Instance of this, who, tho' favour'd with Visions and Revelations from the LORD beyond any that were before him, yet did not take occasion from these gracious Dispensations to slacken his Study in the Holy Writings; but industriously apply'd himself to the reading and considering the Mysteries reveal'd in them. *In the first year* (saith he) *of the Reign of Darius, I Daniel understood by Books, the Number of the years whereof the Word of the LORD came to Jeremiah the Prophet, that He would accomplish seventy Years in the Desolations of Jerusalem* (l). And for this Industry and Pains to learn what he could by his own Application, he is declar'd by *Gabriel* to be *greatly belov'd*, and has those things reveal'd to him by the Angel, which were beyond his own natural Understanding and Skill (m).

Nor did Studying grow less useful when, under the Christian Dispensation, Revelations grew clearer: *Timothy* was the Darling Disciple of *St Paul*,

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(k) Ezek. XXVIII. 3. (l) Dan. IX. 2. (m) Ibid. v. 22, 23. and Ch. X. 11 -- 21.



## The Schools of the Prophets. 27

a Man extraordinarily endow'd with the Gift of the Spirit, and mark'd out by *Prophecy* as one that should prove very useful and eminent in the Work of the Ministry (n). And yet *this* Man St Paul exhorts to give Attendance to *Reading, to Exhortation, and to Doctrine* (o). Where a late learned and excellent Father of our Church (p) observes the Order of the Words to be very remarkable: He is advis'd to give Attendance to *Reading FIRST*, and *THEN* to *Exhortation* and *Doctrine*; i. e. to be himself a well-read Divine, before he undertakes to instruct and teach others. The very Words too of the Apostle, he observes to be emphatical: For he advises *Timothy* not only to read and study, that he might be able to exhort and teach with Profit, but to give Attendance to Reading, and *not to neglect the Gift that was in him*; but to meditate on the things that he had read and learn'd, and to addict and give himself wholly to them. All which Phrases evidently signified that the greatest Industry and Diligence were to be us'd by him in Reading and Study, and the other Exercises that are there mention'd. The same thing (saith he) which St Paul intends when he admonishes him afterwards to stir up the Gift of God which was in him (q): where the Greek Word ἀναζωπυρεῖν signifies to cherish and rekindle a Fire, by blowing and supplying it with new Fuel, which otherwise would be apt to be extinguish'd and die.

Nay even St Paul, who gave this Advice to his Disciple *Timothy*, and who was taught in the My-

(n) 1 Tim. I. 18.

(o) 1 Tim. IV. 13.

(p) Bp Bull's Sermon on 2 Tim. IV. 13. p. 114.

(q) 2 Tim. I. 6.

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series of Religion by the Lord *JESUS Himself*, and could boast of *Visions and Revelations* and of *Spiritual Gifts* beyond all the Apostles (r); even this great Apostle, I say, thinks it an Advantage that he had been educated and brought up at the Feet of *Gamaliel* (s). The Proficiency he then made in all the Parts of Human Literature under so eminent a Master, he found to the last of great Use and Service to him in his preaching and writing both to *Gentiles* and *Jews* (t). Nor did his Inspiration afterwards by the Holy Ghost superceed his further Reading and Study; on the contrary we may infer that he persu'd them both, with the same Industry and Diligence that he did before. To what end else doth he write to *Timothy* to bring him *his Book-Case, his Books and his Parchments* (u)? What indeed I render by *Book-Case*, is in our *English* Translation call'd a *Cloak*: But the Original Word may be interpreted a *Book-Case* or *Scriptore* (x); and so it is render'd in the old *Syriack* Version (y), and so it would agree better with the other things *St Paul* writes for here, viz. *His Books and his Parchments*: By the first of which are understood a few choice Books which the Apostle had collected; by the other he is suppos'd to mean his *Common Place-Book*, wherein he had noted what he thought might

(r) See 2 Cor. XI, XII. and 1 Cor. XIV. 18.

(s) Act. XXII. 3.

(t) See *Bp Bull* ut *supra* p. 401.

(u) 2 Tim. IV. 13.

(x) *Φαυλόνης*, as in some Copies, or *Φελόνης*, as in others. Upon which words see *Phavorinus*, *Hesychius*, and *Leigh's Critica Sacra*. See also *Estius* upon the Place. *Phavorinus* also says that *Φελόνης* signifies *εἰλητὸν το*

*μυρίων μίμρανον*, a folded Vellum or Parchment, which perhaps (saith *Dr Hammond*) may be all one with the *μίμρανον*, hereafter mention'd; because they being mention'd with a *μυρίων* δὲ, but especially, seem to denote somewhat which had been formerly mention'd, rather than any new thing.

(y) So also *Tremellius's Version* (which is a Translation of the *Syriack*) reads *Domum Scriptorum* &c.

be of Use to him out of the many Books he had read; which therefore being the Fruit of some years Study he charges *Timothy especially* to bring with him (2). So that let *φαιλόνης* signifie what it will; it is plain from the Text that our Apostle, tho' inspir'd, had still Occasion for his *Parchments* and *Books*, and that he sent for them in order to read and make use of them, since otherwise he sent for them to no Purpose.

2. This is the first Observation which naturally arises from the Subject of my Discourse: And this as naturally suggests another not less pertinent or proper: And that is in relation to the Folly and Madness of some Enthusiasts amongst us, who, under the Pretence of a *Light within* (which they blasphemously assert to supply the Want of Human Learning) despise and renounce those ordinary means for the attaining of Knowledge which God affords. We have seen that in the Times of the *extraordinary* Dispensation of it, the Spirit of God was never given but to the Diligent and Industrious, and to such as did their Best to attain it. Even those who expected and depended upon the Illumination of the Holy Ghost, did not expect that the Spirit should render their Studies needless; but rather us'd the greater Diligence in the One, in order to obtain a greater Portion of the Other. The Assistance vouchsaf'd by the Holy Ghost is well express'd by *St Paul*, where he saies that *the Spirit HELPETH our Infirmities* (a): It *helps*, not by doing every thing for us; but by affording it's Assistance where our own

(2) See *Eftius and Grotius* and *Bull ut supra.*  
*Pool's Synoplis on the Place*; and

(a) *Rom. VIII. 26.*



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Power fails. The Original Word is very expressive and significant: *Συναντιλαμβάνεται*: It helps together with and overgainst us: As when one Man joins his Shoulders to help another in the Lifting of a Burthen. So that even the *Extraordinary* Gifts of the Holy Ghost, whenever they are vouchsaf'd, are not design'd to *superceed* our natural Faculties, but to *assist* them; not to *slacken* our Industry but to *encourage* it. And therefore "the Divine Assistance and Human Industry must alwaies go together, and an Anathema is due to that Doctrine which separates and divides them (b).

Some few Instances indeed may be given of Men that have been inspir'd immediatly and of a sudden, without any Application or Endeavors of their own: as was the Case of *Amos* in the Text, and perhaps of others of the Prophets, and of most of the Apostles and Disciples of our Lord: But then this alwaies happen'd upon emergent Occasions, and so is not to be expected ordinarily in the Church. However if our modern Pretenders to Inspiration will show the same Power and Demonstration of the Spirit as the Prophets and Apostles; if they will confirm their Mission by Miracles and Signs, or by speaking in Tongues which they never learn'd; if to these they will join the Apostolical Test and confess that *Jesus Christ is come in the Flesh* (c), and preach the same Gospel, and the same Gospel only, that was deliver'd by him and his Apostles after Him (d); we shall be ready to acknowledge their Spiritual Gifts, however meanly they may be furnish'd with the Endowments of Nature. Nay we will join issue with them upon lower Terms

(b) Bull *in supra*.

(c) 1 John. IV. 2.

(d) Galat. I. 8, 9.

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than these ; Let them omit the extraordinary Tests of their Mission, and only speak consistently with Decency and Sence, and they will not find us averse to examine their Plea : But the Spirit, we are sure, can never be the Author of Blasphemy and Nonsense, which yet most of them vent under Cover of his Name ; no more than He can be guilty of Falseness and Fraud, which the remaining few would impute to him, who pretend to speak those things by Inspiration, which it is plain they have gain'd by Labour and Study which they would seem to decry. But

3. Besides these Enthusiasts who depreciate Human Learning under pretence of being assisted by a Divine Illumination ; there are not wanting on the other side those who declaim against the Necessity of either, under a Notion that the Rule of our Faith is so intelligible and easie, that there is nothing wanting but a good natural *Understanding, Integrity* and *Zeal* to qualify a Preacher to teach and explain it. This is a Plea, against which the whole Tenour of my Discourse lies stronger, (if possible) than it does against the former. For we have seen that those who expected to have their Understandings enlighten'd by the Holy Ghost, had still occasion for all the Learning and Knowledge they could attain to by ordinary means, to fit them for their Office. And therefore much more surely must they stand in need of all the Helps that Human Knowledge and Industry can supply, who undertake the Performance of the same Holy Office, meerly upon the Strength of their own natural Abilities. Accordingly, if we look back into the Practice of the *Jews* whose Methods of educating to the Offices of Religion have already been

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been so serviceable upon the former point; we shall find they will equally bear us out in the condemning the Presumption of those forward Pretenders, of whom we are now speaking. No illiterate Mechanick was suffer'd amongst them to jump immediatly from a *Shop-board* or *Stall* into a *Pulpit* or *Desk*, as Impudence or Folly would push him on; nor indeed were *any* Persons allow'd to take upon themselves the Office of preaching, or reading publick Lectures in Divinity, till after they had been regularly prepar'd for it and ordain'd (e). To this end the Cities that were given by Lot to the *Levites* (f), were as so many Universities for the training up Students to the Knowledge of the Law, from whence they were afterwards dispers'd, as there was Occasion, into the several Synagogues to instruct the People (g). So that the *Keeping of Knowledge*, (as the Prophet (h) expresses it) was alwaies committed to the *Priests Lips*, and they who would *seek the Law*, were to *seek it at his Mouth*. For he was the proper *Messenger of the LORD of Hosts*; i. e. the Person who was the fittest, both as to his Qualifications and Authority, to declare and explain the Will of God.

Nor are such previous Preparations less necessary now under the *Christian Dispensation*, than they were formerly under the *Jewish*. It is true, the *New Testament* is in most parts more easie to be understood than the *Old*; But still we are assur'd by one that writ part of it, that there are some things even in the *New* so *hard to be understood* that

(e) Lightfoot. Vol. 1. p. 612.  
Vol. 2. p. 86.

(f) Josh. XXI.

(g) Lightfoot *in supra.*

(h) Malachi II. 7.



they who are unlearn'd and unstable may wrest them to their own Destruction (i). And St. Paul we find gives Instructions to Timothy (notwithstanding he had been vers'd in the Holy Scriptures from a Child (k) and was then esteem'd learn'd enough to be Bishop of a Church) that he would still give Attendance to Reading and Meditation, that he might be the better qualify'd for Exhortation and Doctrine (l). And surely if Timothy a Contemporary of the Apostles, and a favourite Disciple of one of the greatest amongst them, of one who not only writ great part of the N. Testament, but indeed some of the most difficult Parts of the whole; if such a one, I say, had still occasion to read and meditate to fit him for the Work of Exhortation and Doctrine; can we imagine that a Person at above sixteen hundred years Distance from the Time that the latest of the Scriptures were compos'd, should be able to perform this Work, (as he ought to do) without any Reading or Meditation at all?

But I need not, I believe, enlarge any further to expose the Absurdity either of this, or of the former, Pretence: What has already been said is sufficient, I hope, to show that altho' they differ in Principle, yet in the Result they both agree; and that, tho' they may seem, like Samson's Foxes, to pull contrary ways, yet they are both detach'd from the same Quarter, and both combine to do Mischief where they go. For whether Learning be decry'd as insufficient on the one hand, or as superfluous on the other; it is plain that both Sides contribute to obstruct its Advancement, and so Ignorance or Barbarism is made way for by either. And

(i) 2 Pet. III. 16.

(k) 2 Tim. III. 15.

(l) 1 Tim. IV. 13, 14.

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what Cause this is design'd to promote, we may easily conjecture. *Ignorance* is the fruitful Mother of Superstition: For they who know nothing, are in a ready Disposition to believe any thing. In the dark Ages of Christianity the Dregs of *Popery* were not too gross to be eagerly imbib'd: Nor could Men see their Errors, till Learning reviv'd again, in some parts of the Church, about the Time of the Reformation. But as That let in Light, Truth gradually appear'd. Nor is it in the Power of our Adversaries to impose upon us again, so long as we have Sense enough to discover the Cheat. And therefore no wonder if among so many Emissaries that are daily sent out in different Disguises to confound and delude us; some should be employ'd in depreciating Learning which they know to be the greatest Bar in their Way ††.

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†† I cannot help, upon this Occasion, expressing my Surprise, that so zealous an Assertor of the *Protestant Cause*, as my Lord of BANGOR would seem, should be found with our Enemies upon the Point before us. Who would have imagin'd that so very *discerning* and *distinguishing* a Writer should ever have represented *Learning* as the chief and principal Cause of *Doubts* and *Differences*, and *Ignorance* as the safest and securest Guide to Truth and Certainty? or that one who bears at least the Name of a Christian Bishop, should assert a single *illiterate Man* (purely upon the account of his want of Literature) to be as capable of judging in Matters of Religion, as a *General Council* of the most learned Men, united in their Suffrages, and assembled together with the utmost Solemnity (\*)? What is this but to make way for *Popery* by introducing *Ignorance* which is its Foundation and Support? And therefore is not there too much Reason to suspect that His Lordship's Instancing in the *Papish Countries* for the Proof of his Assertion, is but the stale Artifice which may always be observ'd to be practis'd by those who are undermining the Protestant Cause. It is certain that His Lordship has had the Misfortune to advance several Doctrines of the *Romish Church*: and (which is still more unlucky) at a Time when he was harbouring a Person in his

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(\*) See his Lordship's Answer to the Representation of the Committee. p. 98.

## *The Schools of the Prophets.* 35

But it is more than Time that I should hasten to conclude: And yet it would be inexcusable should I wholly make an End of a Discourse on this Subject, upon this Occasion, and before this Audience, without observing the near Resemblance we have the Happiness to bear, in the *Methods* of our Education, to those ancient Seminaries of which we have been speaking. A Resemblance, I hope, that will always be a Motive to imitate them as closely in *Application* and *Diligence*. And then what should hinder but that the one should be as illustrious and useful as the other? We want nothing necessary, or even convenient, to make us so, which they enjoy'd: Our Discipline is as regular, and our Helps for Studying are as great: Our Manner of Living is as well contriv'd to ease us from Care, and our Dwellings as well situated for Contemplation and Thought. In short we are no ways inferior in *outward* Advantages, if so be we are not deficient as to those *from within*. And we shall not, I hope, be wanting to our selves for what it is purely in our own Power to supply. Inward Piety and Goodness, and the Keeping the Mind continually in a serious, devout and heavenly Frame (which I have shew'd to be Qualifications that are essential to a studious and contemplative Life) can only be the Effect of our own Watchfulness and Care. Not but that we have

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House, who acknowledges himself to have been once a *Jesuite* profess'd, and who is suspected from his Conduct to be still one in Disguise. Whether His Lordship came into the Sentiments of this Man by Surprise or Design, I shall leave himself to determine: But I think that so long as his Writings remain, it ought to be remember'd who was at his Elbow when he penn'd them.



## 36 *The Schools of the Prophets.*

all the Help and Assistance, even in this respect, that Opportunities can afford us, by the Religious Provision that our Founders have made for the continual Return of *Hours of Prayer*. They knew how necessary an habitual Devotion was to keep Religion alive in the Heart: And they knew how incapable a Heart would be, without Religion, of receiving any Divine Impressions from above: And for this Reason, it was always their Principal Concern that, together with the Means of being *learn'd*, we should be provided with the means of being *good*. Since therefore we have such happy Opportunities for each, let us not, I beseech you, render both ineffectual, by aiming at the one without the other. For an Observation of a wise Man that was made long since, will be always true, that *into a wicked Soul Wisdom will not enter, nor dwell in a Body that is subject unto Sin* (m). Not that we are *now*, by any Means, to expect the same extraordinary Measures of Inspiration which were formerly vouchsaf'd to the Prophetick Schools; since we have not now the same Occasion for them. Providence now does not call upon Men by any new Revelations; but leaves them to be instructed and guided by the Old. All therefore that is now necessary to fit out and qualify the Man of God, and to *perfect the Saints for the Work of the Ministry*, is to be able to understand those Revelations that have already been given, and to apply them discreetly as new Occasions shall arise. So that the Reason why our Schools are not favour'd *now* with the same extraordinary Gifts and Graces, with which the Prophetick Schools were endow'd;

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(m) Wisd. I. 4.

## *The Schools of the Prophets.* 37

is not because our Studies are of less Consequence, or our Calling less important; but because our ordinary Helps and Assistances are superior to those which they enjoy'd; and because, in a word, we have now the Benefit of their Revelations. Not but that God, if we stand in need of his Divine Illumination, and are duly qualify'd with those previous Dispositions which he demands, will still so far assist our Endeavours, as to render those things easie and intelligible, which, were we left to our own natural Understandings alone, would be difficult and obscure. A Reflection that should teach us, whenever we gain any new Degree of Light, not to ascribe it to our own Ability and Parts, but to him who is the Author and *Father of Light that cometh down from above* (n). For even all our Endowments, whether natural or acquir'd must be referr'd to him, since *all these*, as well as those that are supernatural, *worketh that one and the self-same Spirit, which divideth to every Man severally as he will* (o). Even Nature it self must in the last Resolution be imputed to Grace: *For who* (saith the Apostle) *maketh thee to differ from another? or what hast thou, that thou didst not receive* (p)? Whatever useful Gifts therefore any of us enjoy, let us praise the Author and Dispenser of them all. And what still is wanting let us pray for to him, who promises to *answer us when we call, and to show us the great and mighty things which as yet we know not* (q). This was his Declaration to his Prophets of the Old Testament, and the same is confirm'd by his Apostles in the New: *If any of you lack Wis-*

(n) James I. 17. (o) 1 Cor. XII. 11. (p) 1 Cor. IV. 7. (q) Jer.

## 38 *The Schools of the Prophets.*

*dom (saith St James) let him ask of God, that giveth all Men liberally and upbraideth not, and it shall be given him (r):* And thus blessed with the Divine Assistance upon our own Industry and Pains, we shall make due use of the pious Benefactions we here enjoy, we shall give a grateful Return to the Expende of our Friends, and answer the just Expectations of our Country: Which will then see the Value of a regular Preaching built upon the Foundation of solid Learning; and know how to distinguish it from the Rants of a wild Enthusiasm on the one Hand, and from the Presumption of stupid Ignorance on the other. In a Word even our Enemies will become our Friends, and we shall be esteem'd the Joy of the whole Earth. The Delightsomeness of our Dwellings shall not be envied, nor the Liberality of our Founders be thought to be profuse: But tho' *their Bodies* have long since been buried in Peace, *their Names* shall live for evermore. *The People shall tell of their Wisdom, and the Congregation shall show forth their Praise (s).*

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(r) James I. 5. . (s) Ecclus. XLIV. 14, 15.



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